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ABSTRACT

Literacy in the military has seen drastic changes since the World War II era and even the Vietnam era. Qualification tests are stricter and literacy programs are more available than before. Literacy in the military is crucial in a technological world. In today's armed forces, many soldiers concentrate on the technical aspect of combat through hands-on maintenance and set aside the reading involved in order to understand the complicated task of combat. A study examined the testing process of getting into the military; programs for soldiers who want to improve their literacy; the readability of documents soldiers read; and the literacy experiences of two veterans. Through extensive mathematics and reading comprehension testing, unqualified recruits are weeded out of those soldiers who make the grade in literacy and mathematics. Some soldiers pass the test, yet cannot perform reading tasks at a high school level. Fortunately, there are programs in all branches that assist in bringing all soldiers up to par in regards to reading and writing as well as other areas. A soldier's reading and writing level dictate what kind of occupations are available in the military. The bottom line today is if soldiers cannot read beyond a high school level, their chances for success in the military are small. (Contains 7 references and 2 figures of data.) (Author/RS)

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ED 429 281

Reading, Writing and the American Soldier

A Study of Literacy in the American Armed Forces

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Abstract

Literacy in the military has seen drastic changes since the World War II era and even the Vietnam era. Qualification tests are stricter and literacy programs are more available than before. Literacy in the military is crucial in a technological world. In order for a soldier to comprehend the intricate details of sophisticated machinery, it is important for that soldier to be able to read something as simple as a newspaper or as complex as a repair manual for a Humvee. In today's armed forces, many soldiers concentrate on the technical aspect of combat through hands-on maintenance and set aside the reading involved in order to understand the complicated task of combat.

Through extensive mathematics and reading comprehension testing, unqualified recruits are weeded out of those soldiers who make the grade in literacy and mathematics. Some soldiers pass the test, yet can not perform reading tasks at a high school level. Fortunately, there are programs in all branches that assist in bringing all soldiers up to par in regards to reading and writing as well as other areas.

A soldier's reading and writing level dictate what kind of occupations are available in the military. While there are some occupations available for those with lower literacy levels, tomorrow's military technology will make it impossible for the armed forces to adhere to those levels much longer. The bottom line today is if soldiers can not read beyond a high school level, their chances for success in the military are small.

Introduction

Military men and women ensure the country's protection and defend our nation against enemies, foreign and domestic. Technology in the military is expanding at an astonishing rate of speed. In order to understand the technical aspects of a B-2 bomber or a cruise missile, one must be able to read the manuals and comprehend the technical jargon. Military literacy is not an uncommon topic. The reading skills of soldiers were a concern dating back to Washington's era, when solders were encouraged to read The Bible. Modern day technology is taking over the way solders and civilians go about their every day duties. Are military entrance tests such as the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Batter sufficient for the technical world we live in now? What is the military doing to boost the literacy level of its soldiers? What is the reading level of training manuals and documents in the military? What have the trends been in military literacy dating back to the Vietnam War? My research answered these questions by analyzing the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Batter, looking at literacy programs in the military, determining the readability and grade level of select military documents, and interviews with Vietnam War veterans

Although literacy in the military is a common subject, obtaining the information is somewhat of a chore. Current statistical data is not available to civilians as I found out from Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Military personnel consider this information top secret. As well, there has not been much research done on the topic of military literacy since the 1980's. I do not think much research has been done in military literacy since the 1980's because of the economic and military status of the United States in the 1990's. In the 1980's the United States was plagued by recession, the end of the Cold War and

downsizing in the military. These barriers forced me to rethink the course I wanted to take in this paper. Instead of focusing on statistical data, I decided to research the testing process of getting into the military; programs that are available to soldiers who want to improve their literacy; to analyze military documents soldiers read which will identify the grade level and readability of the documents; and finally to speak with two veterans who recalled their literacy experience in the military.

In order to do this, I looked at past research studies from military literacy experts such as Thomas Sticht and Joan Harman. This research included the following sections: methods and procedures of obtaining the research, what my results and findings were, and finally a discussion of my results and my conclusions about literacy in the military. In addition to the four research methods described above, I also read several ERIC documents, and I will incorporate information from then into the paper. These articles, which though out of date, provided a general overview of past research on literacy in the military.

Methods and Procedures

First, in order to get a firm grasp on literacy in the military, it is important to start at the beginning of the process. This starts with the Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). The contents of the ASVAB was carefully analyzed to determine why this particular test is used now more frequently the tests used in the past. I performed an analysis on portions of the test to determine what grade level they written for and what the reading ease is. Ronald Kappraff and Ronald Bronk's book ASVAB Basics served as my primary research tool to complete this portion of my research.

Secondly, in addition to knowing what it takes to get into the military, it is also important to know what programs are available to soldiers who may need assistance with their reading and writing skills. I looked at the Army's Basic Skills Education Programs, which assisted me in this portion. A break down of the Basic Skills Education Programs for all military branches is available in table format in the Appendix.

Next, I took documents from three branches of the military and compared them to each other to determine if one branch has higher literacy expectations than another. I looked at the Marine handbook, the Recruiting and Retention NCO (Army National Guard) manual, Organizing, Training, and Equipping the Air Force for Crises and Lesser Conflicts. I took a small excerpt from each document. I selected the excerpts based on paragraph format versus outline format. I thought it was easier to examine a paragraph rather than an outline for readability. These documents were selected based on availability. I used Microsoft Word 97 software to determine the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level as well as the Flesch Reading Ease percentage. Flesch Reading Ease scores rates text on a 100-point scale; the higher the score, the easier it is to understand the document. For most standard documents, a score of 60 to 70 percent is appropriate. Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score rates text on a U.S. grade-school level. For example, a score of 8.0 means that an eighth grader can understand the document. For most standard documents, a 7.0 to 8.0 score is reasonable. The following is an example of the excerpt I chose for this research. The other excerpts are in Appendix B. The following paragraph was taken from the Recruiting and Retention NCO (Army National Guard) manual. It is approximately 57 words of text. I wanted to have about the same amount of words for each excerpt.

> Task summaries outline the wartime performance requirements of each critical task in the Soldier's Manual (SM). They provide the soldier and the trainer with the information necessary to prepare, conduct, and evaluate critical task training. As a minimum, task summaries include information you must know, and the skills that you must perform to standard for each task. (p. 1-1)

Finally, I listened to real life accounts of service men that served in the Vietnam War. Chief Petty Officer George Jarboe was drafted in 1969 and recently retired. I also spoke with First Lieutenant Dan Muldoon, who was drafted in 1968 and served for two years. These gentlemen were kind enough to take some time for me out of their busy schedule in order to answer questions about their literacy experience in the military. These interviews allowed me to see the real literacy stories without reading them in a journal article. The two gentlemen were quite candid about their experience in Vietnam and their literacy history..

Findings

Testing Results: Joining the military is similar to attending college for the first time. In order to get in, one must take some sort of aptitude battery. The Armed Forces has used the same test since 1976. The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is the general entrance exam for all armed forces. Throughout history, the entrance exam has seen several different types of tests. The first test was the Alpha and Beta test. These tests were administered during World War I. Following the Alpha and Beta test was the

Army General Classification Test (AGCT) of World War II. This test was to measure the "general learning ability that could be used to assign new recruits to jobs" (Sticht & Armstrong. 1994, 25). The Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) followed the AGCT shortly after the end of World War II. The AFQT would later become the ASVAB in 1976. All prospective soldiers must pass the ASVAB before advancing to the next stage of their enlistment process. The ASVAB contains 10 tests that assess the prospective soldier's science, mathematical, language, mechanical, electronics and coding speeds. The test takes approximately 144 minutes with an additional 36 minutes allotted for administrative purposes such as instruction giving. The test has approximately 344 questions of which the majority concentrates on mathematics and language. The language portion of the exam consists of paragraph comprehension and word identification questions.

Nestled in the ASVAB is the AFQT. This four-part portion of the test determines who gets into the military. The other six tests on the ASVAB determine which military occupations are suitable to the soldier. The AFQT has four subtest that include arithmetic reason, mathematics knowledge, word knowledge, and paragraph comprehension raw score. Arithmetic reasoning "measures ability to solve arithmetic word problems." The mathematics knowledge portion of the test "measures knowledge of general mathematics principles, including algebra and geometry." Word knowledge assesses the "ability to select the correct meaning of the words presented in context and to identify the best synonym for a given word." Below is an example of a word knowledge question:

Word Knowledge

Word Skill 1: Looking for Similar Words

For each question, choose the answer that means most nearly the same at the underlined word

Sample 1: Massive means most nearly

1. large
2. instructional
3. slippery
4. loud

Answer: LARGE is the correct answer (p. 175)

Moreover, the final part of the AFQT is paragraph comprehension. This evaluates one's ability to "obtain information from written passages" (Kappraff & Bronk. 1998, vii). Below is an example of this section:

Paragraph Comprehension

Finding the Main Idea

The bravest and most famous knight in King Arthur's legendary court was Sir Launcelot. When Launcelot was a young man, he went to King Arthur's court and became a knight who was feared throughout many lands. He was loved by several women, but his love for King Arthur's wife destroyed the legendary Knights of the Round Table

The best title for this paragraph is

1. The Knights of the Round Table
2. The Legend of Sir Launcelot
3. Initiation into Knighthood
4. Legendary Combat Techniques

Answer: The best title for the paragraph is #2. (p. 233)

Literacy Program Results: Once a soldier makes the grade and enlists into the military, his or her skills are challenged both physically and mentally. For a soldier with a below average reading level, Initial Entry Training (IET) and Basic Combat Training (BCT), could prove more difficult as the military is incorporating more classroom time than in previous years. Additional classroom time is crucial to fully prepare soldiers for combat. While hands-on training is important in the military for maintenance purposes, classroom instruction educates soldiers on procedures and concepts that are not mechanically related.

Before or during IET training, a soldier may receive assistance through the Basic Skills Education Program. Each branch has a version of this type of training. See Appendix A for a listing of these programs sorted by branch. Information in the table was compiled by Thomas Sticht and was documented in Joan Harman's journal Three Years of Evaluation of the Army's Basic Skills Education Program. Research Report 1380. The Army's program retains the original name or BSEP. There are two forms of the BSEP program labeled I and II. Joan Harman's (1984) three-year research of this field points out interesting details. She states "potential candidates for BSEP training are soldiers who fail to met the criterion score on the General Technical (GT) subtest of the ASVAB

or who speak English as a second language" (p. 1). Soldiers are eligible for phase I of the program after they complete the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) for general literacy training and the English Comprehension Level Test (ECLT) for language training (p.1). A soldier may also enter the program by a command referral from his supervisor.

BSEP I and II programs have subprograms designed to meets the specific needs of the soldiers. However, there is only one program in both sections designed solely for literacy training. The BSEP I program offers three sub-programs for remediation and training. The first program is Basic Literacy. This program provides remedial training in reading, writing, and computing skills while soldiers are at the training base. Those who qualify for this program had screening test results (i.e. the ASVAB) below a fifth grade ability level (Harman p.2). The BSEP II program differs in that it is offered at unit sites rather than at training sites. The difference in the two sites is that a training sight refers to Basic Training for Advanced Initial Training (AIT), while a unit site is where a soldier is stationed for duty. In the BSEP II program, soldiers whose screening tests in reading were below a ninth grade level went to remedial literacy training (Harman p. 4).

For a more detailed list of all Basic Skills Education Programs, please see Appendix A.

Word Analysis Results: To understand the level of literacy in the military, it is important to look at the texts in which today's soldiers read. I looked at manuals/documents from three branches of the military. I wanted to compare the level of readability and the grade level of each branch. I analyzed its readability factors with computer software provided by Microsoft Word 97.

First, I looked at the Army National Guard. I obtained a manual and trainer's guide for recruiters. This book is entitled Recruiting and Retention NCO (Army National Guard). The contents of this manual assist those soldiers who choose Recruiting as their role in the military. The material includes information relating to processing new recruits, eligibility of recruits, prospecting for leads, and marketing of the military. A good portion of this book was in an outline format. The excerpt I chose was in the Overview section, chapter one. It was in paragraph format. The excerpt contained 57 words. The Flesch Reading Ease percentage was 45.0%. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level was 11.6. See Figures 1 and 2 for a comparison of the branches.

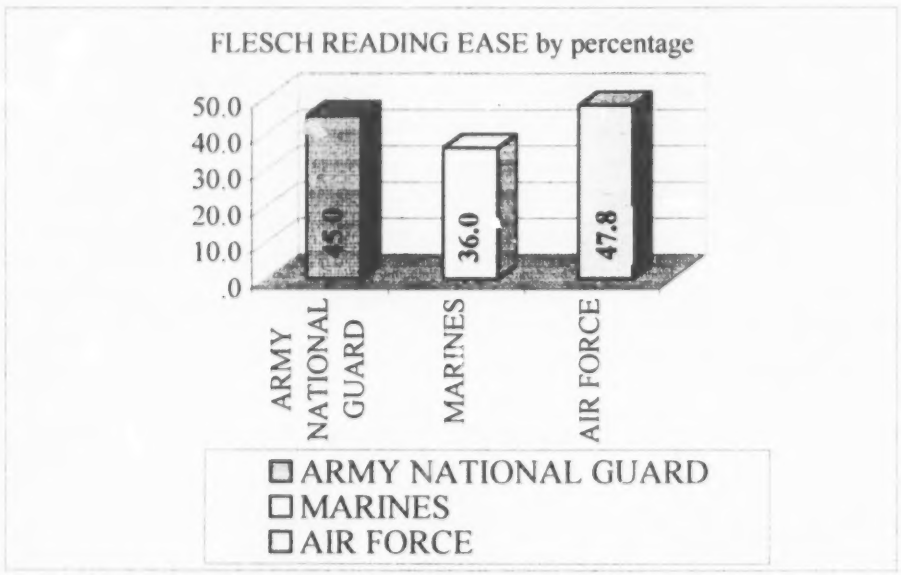

Figure 1. Flesch Reading Ease by percentage results.

Next, I obtained a Marine handbook that includes all material a Marine must know before becoming a soldier. This material includes medical data, personal financial management, history of the Marine Corps, customs and courtesies, as well as other information regarding the Marine Corps. Like the Army National Guard training manual,

a good portion of the manual was in outline format. I took a paragraph excerpt from this manual in the "Introduction of Core Values of the United States Marine Corps". This excerpt contained 69 words. This excerpt had a Flesch Reading Ease percentage of 36%. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level was 12.0.

Figure 2. Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level results

Finally, I analyzed a document created for the Air Force entitled Organizing, Training and Equipping the Air Force for Crises and Lesser Conflicts. The material included in this document dealt with issues regarding "future applications of aerospace power to operations short of war" (p. iii). This document was different from the other two discussed in that it consisted of more paragraphs rather than outlines. An explanation for this may be that it is not a training manual, but an informative document. This excerpt contained 64 words. The Flesch Reading Ease percentage was 47.8%. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level was 10.5

Personal Accounts Results: In addition to looking at the testing process, the programs the military offers to increase literacy, and analyzing military writings, I wanted to get

personal accounts from soldiers of the past in interviews with an Army and Navy veteran. A list of my interview questions is available in Appendix C. I spoke with Dan Muldoon on April 19, 1999. He is a Vietnam veteran who works at the Vet Center as a counselor for veterans. He served in Vietnam for two years and seven months in the United States Army. Mr. Muldoon was drafted while in college pursuing a degree in business administration. He obtained his Bachelor's of Science Business Administration from Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne after returning from Vietnam. After that, he attended the University of St. Francis where he obtained a Masters degree in Counseling. In addition, he received a Masters degree in Social Work from Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis.

He attended Officer's Candidate School (OCS), a six-month course, in order to receive his officer commission. OCS required extensive reading and assessments more so than that of the average soldier. Many of his courses in OCS pertained to leadership, medical knowledge, weaponry, and communications. He referred to it as a "generalized education". While he did not do the actual hands-on tasks, the Army required him to know what each job entailed and how to perform it. When asked to describe the training manual, he stated the manuals were mainly text with few pictures. In addition to reading, he also had to write reports such as military personnel evaluations and reports of geographical conditions of a certain location where the squadron may be dropped while out in the field.

In general, individuals entering the military today have at least a high school reading level. According to Mr. Muldoon though, this was not always the case. He stated that there were some soldiers assigned to him who had reading levels as low as the sixth

grade. In his opinion, today's military force is composed of more educated individuals than when he served. Reasons for the change in literacy levels include an all-volunteer army of today as opposed to a drafted army back in the 1960's.

I also spoke with George Jarboe on April 19, 1999. He is also a Vietnam War veteran and the Allen County Veterans Service Officer. He was drafted in 1969 and served for 25 years in the United States Navy. He was a Chief Petty Officer in the administrative field, a Chief Yeoman. His duties primarily consisted of clerical duties. While he stated there was a good deal of reading to do, he added that much of his duties included writing. He wrote semi-annual and annual reports, drafted correspondence, assisted in message traffic for the radios, and completed officer fitness reports. Mr. Jarboe stated that the more senior a person was in rank back in 1969, the more writing there was involved. This is still true today. Most of his reading and writing skills were refined in on the job training. Since he was drafted right out of high school, he had no post-secondary education as Mr. Muldoon did.

Mr. Jarboe and I spent a good deal of time talking about trends literacy today in the military. During the draft, he noticed the quality of soldiers was high. However, once the draft stopped the quality of soldiers took a dip. He stated he saw a big dip in the mid 1970's in the education level of the three enlisted lower grade levels: Private, First Private and Private First Class. Mr. Jarboe also noted that in the later 1970's, the Army training manuals had to be rewritten to an eighth grade reading level. He attributed this to the fact that in order to retain soldiers; the material had to be brought down to the lowest standard. Since the 1970's, however, he sees the trend in qualified soldiers rising. He relates this to a stronger economy. In addition, he affirms that higher test requirements

make for a better military force. Testing weeds out those who are not qualified to deal with the technical aspects of the military.

Conclusion

The military is doing its part to ensure the quality of today's soldiers. Testing requirements, military based literacy programs, readability analysis, and personal accounts have brought me to the conclusion that although the military may struggle with their literacy skills, I think they are on the right track. The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery is weeding out those recruits who do not read at the prescribed level. Even if a soldier got in who was not up to par on reading and writing skills there are programs in each of the branches teach remedial.

I was most surprised with the readability analysis. I noticed that when the grade-level was higher the readability ease was lower. For example, the Marine handbook had the highest grade level yet the lowest readability. This is surprising because all soldiers wanting to be Marines must read the handbook. On the other hand, the Air Force document had the highest readability ease yet the lowest grade level. The document was not a document that would necessarily be required by all Air Force personnel. The only reason I can give for the difference is that in order for an enlistee to reach the level of achievement as a United States Marine, he or she must be able to comprehend material on a senior high school reading level. I found that the manual was easy to read because of the outline format.

Additional research was done by Thomas Sticht and documented in a journal artilce by Lori Forlizzi in 1989. According to Sticht the median reading grade level of entering recruits then was 9.5 (p. 9). These numbers were complied in 1982 and 1986.

Reading levels for today's recruits is unknown by myself. Also in 1989, Literacy Beat published an article regarding literacy in the military. The author was not stated in this article, however, the it reported that 95% of new recruits are high school graduates. One of the studies included in this journal article, the Human Resources Research Organization, stated that graduates of the traditional classroom "are better prepared for military classrooms, rules and regulations" (p. 2).

My purpose of this research was to see what direction the military was taking in regard to finding qualified soldiers. Identifying whether ample testing and programs designed to combat illiteracy in the military were the primary focuses. I would like to continue this research by collecting samples of soldiers' writings that are in basic training as well as those who serve in the military. It is important to see what the military trends are and future plans in reading and writing. This means a world of difference in a society that relies on military powers. Without qualified individuals, the United States may not uphold its high level of military power.

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Appendix A

BASIC SKILLS EDUCATION IN THE MILITARY: PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

(FROM STICHT 1982)

SERVICE/ PROGRAM	CONTRACT/ IN HOUSE	LENGTH OF PROGRAM	BASIC SKILLS ADDRESSED	ORIENTATION	INSTRUCTIONAL MODE	MATERIALS USED	STANDARDIZED
AIR FORCE							
BMT LITERACY	IN-HOUSE	CORRECTIVE: MEAN 7 TRAINING SESSIONS OF 2HRS; REMEDIAL MEAN: 7.7 TRAINING DAYS	CORRECTIVE: DECODING REMEDIAL: READING, MOTIVATION, AND TIME MANAGEMENT	GENERAL	SELF-PACED	REMEDIAL: SCIENCE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES MATERIALS	YES
STEP	IN-HOUSE	10 DAYS	LISTENING, VISUAL INTERPRETATION, REASONING, STUDY SKILLS, ADULT RESPONSIBILITY			AV PRESENTATIONS, WORK BOOKS	N/A
ASP	IN-HOUSE	VARIABLE (MEAN 5 FOUR HOU SESSIONS	STUDY SKILLS, TESTMANSHIP, MEMORY, VOCABULARY, ATTITUDE	MILITARY JOB ORIENTED	FLEXIBLE ENTRY/EXIT	AF OWNED MATERIALS, ACTUAL JOB MATERIALS	N/A
PLATO/SIP	N/A	MAX 33 HRS MEAN 18-20 HOURS	READING, MATH	GENERAL	CBI	PLATO PROGRAMS	YES

Appendix A

BASIC SKILLS EDUCATION IN THE MILITARY: PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

(FROM STICHT 1982)

SERVICE/ PROGRAM	CONTRACT/ IN HOUSE	LENGTH OF PROGRAM	BASIC SKILLS ADDRESSED	ORIENTATION	INSTRUCTIONAL MODE	MATERIALS USED	STANDARDIZED
AIR FORCE							
MSTP	IN-HOUSE	MEAN 3 DAYS	MATH	MIXED	SELF-PACED WITH INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION		NO
TT-IDEA	CONTRACT		ENGLISH GRAMMAR, READING, MATH	GENERAL	SELF-STUDY		NO
IDEA	CONTRACT	UP TO 10 HOURS PER WEEK	READING, MATH	GENERAL			NO
MARINES							
BSEP BASIC SKILLS EDUCATION PROGRAM	CONTRACT	100-234 HRS, VARIES	ENGLISH, MATH, READING, ESL	GENERAL	VARIES	COMMERCIAL	NO

Appendix A

BASIC SKILLS EDUCATION IN THE MILITARY: PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

(FROM STICHT 1982)

SERVICE/ PROGRAM	CONTRACT/ IN HOUSE	LENGTH OF PROGRAM	BASIC SKILLS ADDRESSED	ORIENTATION	INSTRUCTIONAL MODE	MATERIALS USED	STANDARDIZED
ARMY							
BSEP I BASIC SKILLS EDUCATION PROGRAM	CONTRACT	LITERACY: READING: 120 HOURS IN 6 WEEKS. MATH: 60 HOURS IN 6 WEEKS; ESL 6 WEEKS	LITERACY: READING, WRITING, LISTENING AND ORAL COMMUNICATION, ARITHMETIC. ESL: EMPHASIS (OR FOCUS ON SPEAKING & LISTENING	JOB-ORIENTED		LIT: SOLDIERS MANUALS, DA PAMPHLETS, REGULATIONS ESL: AMERICAN LANGUAGE COURSE (ALC)	NO
BSEP II BASIC SKILLS EDUCAITON PROGRAM	CONTRACT	LIT: UP TO 360 HOURS	READING, COMPUTATIONAL WRITING, SPEAKING AND LISTENING	JOB-ORIENTED		LIT: CONTRACTOR DEVELOPED MATERIALS ESL: ALC	NO
ASEP ADVANCED SKILLS EDUCATION PROGRAM	CONTRACT			JOB-ORIENTED		DEVELOPED BY CONTRACTOR TO ENCOMPASS TASKS IN SOLDIER'S MANUALS	NO

Appendix A

BASIC SKILLS EDUCATION IN THE MILITARY: PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

(FROM STICHT 1982)

SERVICE/ PROGRAM	CONTRACT/ IN HOUSE	LENGTH OF PROGRAM	BASIC SKILLS ADDRESSED	ORIENTATION	INSTRUCTIONAL MODE	MATERIALS USED	STANDARDIZED
NAVY							
ART	CONTRACT/IN HOUSE	105-175 HOURS; VARIES	DECODING, VOCABULARY, COMPREHENSION, READING RATE, STUDY SKILLS	MIXED	MODULES PRESCRIBED ON BASIS OF DIAGNOSTIC TEST. MIX OF LOCKSTEP AND INDIVIDUAL	MIXTURE OF NAVY AND COMMERCIAL	YES
BEST	IN-HOUSE	30 DAYS	MILITARY SKILLS, INDIVIDUAL GROWTH, RESPONSIBLE LIVING, COUNSELING	MILITARY LIFE COPING	MIXTURE OF LOCKSTEP AND INDIVIDUAL	INCLUDES SOME BLUE JACKET MANUAL	YES
FST	CONTRACT	45HOURS	ONE OF THE BASIC SKILLS	GENERAL			NO
JOBS	CONTRACT		READING, LISTENING, COMPREHENDING, STUDY SKILLS, MATH	JOB-ORIENTED	LOCK-STEP 4 JOB-ORIENTED STRANDS EACH	EACH STRAND USES APPROPRIATE TECH MANUALS AND MATERIALS	YES

Appendix B

Reading excerpts

Excerpt taken from the Recruiting and Retention NCO (Army National Guard) manual:

> Task summaries outline the wartime performance requirements of each critical task in the Soldier's Manual (SM). They provide the soldier and the trainer with the information necessary to prepare, conduct, and evaluate critical task training. As a minimum, task summaries include information you must know, and the skills that you must perform to standard for each task. (p. 1-1)

Specifics: Number of Words – 57

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level – 11.6

Flesch Reading Ease by percentage – 45.0

Excerpt taken from United States Marine Corps Student Handout: Introduction to the Core Values of The United States Marine Corps:

> Honor - This is the bedrock of our character. The quality that guide Marines to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior, never to lie, cheat, or steal, and also to abide by an uncompromising code of integrity; to respect human dignity, and to have concern for each other. The quality of maturity, dedication, trust, and dependability, that commits Marines to act responsibly, to be accountable

for their actions. (p. 3-94)

Specifics: Number of Words – 69

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level – 12.0

Flesch Reading Ease by percentage – 36.0

Excerpt taken from Organizing, Training, and Equipping the Air Force for Crises and Lesser Conflicts:

> Operations short of war are one of three functional responsibilities assigned to the U.S. Air Force; the other two responsibilities are the prosecution of war and the mobilization for war. Operations short of war are certainly not new to the U.S. military; they are an integral and honored aspect of U.S. history going back to the nation's beginnings and continuing throughout the Cold War. (p. 1)

Specifics: Number of Words – 69

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level – 12.0

Flesch Reading Ease by percentage – 36.0

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. What is your name?
2. When did you serve in the Vietnam War?
3. Which branch did you serve in?
4. What was your rank?
5. What was your occupation in the military?
6. What kind of reading did you have to do for your military occupation? Writing?
7. Did you take part in any literacy programs sponsored by the military?
8. What trends do you notice regarding literacy in the military when you served? Today?

Appendix D

Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

ASVAB—Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery

BSEP—Basic Skills Education Program

AGCT—Army General Classification Test

AFQT—Armed Services Qualification Test

IET—Initial Entry Training

BCT—Basic Combat Training

GT—General Technical

TABE—Test of Adult Basic Education

ECLT—English Comprehension Level Test

AIT—Advanced Initial Training

OCS—Officer Candidate School

Flesch Reading Ease—rates text on a 100-point scale

Flesch-Kincaide Grade Level—rates text on a U.S. grade-school level

Reflection

Military literacy was not something I thought much about until this paper. After taking the ASVAB two times and the Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) once; I knew some of the requirements of military eligibility. The tests are not easy. Someone with a below average literacy level could not pass the ASVAB unless that person was good at taking tests. As for the DLAB, one must be literate in order to pass the test or have a good understanding of language.

Throughout the course of this paper, I learned of the various programs the military offers people. I am surprised though that there is not some sort of class that is available to all soldiers regardless of where they place on the tests. I remember watching a movie called Renaissance Man with Danny Devito. In this movie, Devito plays a character who is a burned out English teacher. He is stuck teaching a group of soldiers with below level literacy skills. Unhappy about this, he teaches something that interests him, Shakespeare. In the end, Devito's character has the once illiterate soldiers reciting *Hamlet*.

In addition to learning about literacy in the military, I also learned a different way to do research papers. This was my first action research paper and I like it better than an informative research paper because of the structure. While it was difficult for me to obtain the action portion of this paper, I managed to find it.

All in all, this was a pleasant learning experience aside from the fact that I lost almost all of my paper at 4:00 in the morning the day that is was due. I look forward to doing more research about literacy in the military.